

Christian convert who rails at the old cult and causes sedition among the people. Diversity of opinion and liberty of disputation in things theological is a fundamental law. " This is one of the ancientest laws among them—that no man shall be blamed for reasoning in the maintenance of his own religion." A most bold assertion truly in the face of the heresy laws and inquisitions of his own century. He is most explicit on the inherent right of every man to freedom of conscience and speech. King Utopus decreed that it should be lawful for every man to favour and follow what religion he would. Violence and angry contention in the propagation of religious opinion are punished by banishment or bondage. Truth must be its own witness and vindicator. Free thought is an inviolable privilege, and More would only stop short at the denial of the immortality of the soul. Even in this extreme case a man shall not be punished for his opinion, though he may not hold office in the commonwealth. For the rest, More's religion is pervaded by a firm belief in a future life, in the providential arrangement of the world and its affairs, especially in Utopia, and is marked by a beautiful serenity of soul that is the best proof of the power of creed. The priests are married, and even women may exercise this office! Toleration and innovation could hardly go further than this.

Yet More was to prove false to his own principles after the Reformation movement had begun to trouble the land with contention and strife. Unfortunately, he gave proof in his own person, as the persecutor of the Protestants during his tenure of the chancellorship, that Utopia was too theoretic in this as in other respects for practical application. To speak of "the pestilente secte of Luther and Tyndale," as he does in " A Dialogue of Sir Thomas More, Knighte," was unworthy of the author of Utopia. Unworthy, too, of the man who ridiculed the pedantry of the schoolmen, as well as championed freedom of thought, to commend the burning of Tyndale's New Testament. Equally so the defence of the burning of heretics by the secular power—an expedient which, of course, absolves the Church from all blame in the gruesome business. It may be said, in his vindication, that as chancellor he was bound to enforce the law against heretics. But even the chancellor ought to have found means of evading a